



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

DATE: September 13, 2021

TO: Wyatt Shields, City Manager

CC: Cindy Mester, Deputy City Manager; Paul Stoddard, AICP – Planning Director; Daniel Schlitt, Director of Recreation and Parks

FROM: Corey Jannicelli, Arts and Humanities Coordinator, and Emily Bazemore, Planner

SUBJECT: Proposed Goals and Guidelines for City Hall Artwork

Background

The previous theme for City Council Chambers in design and furnishing was celebrating Falls Church Connections with the founding of the nation.

The four portraits hanging in Chambers were commissioned by VPIS, led by Lou Olom, Keith Thurston and Charlie Moore and approved by City Council. The four portraits represent the Founding Fathers of Virginia. Portraits of George Washington and George Mason were painted in 1984 followed by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in 1994. All four portraits are painted by Casimir Gregory Stapko and are copies of previously painted portraits.

With the recent renovation to City Hall and Council Chambers in 2019, there has been an interest in adding artwork to the building that represents the current vision for our City, to celebrate the City's history, community character and cultural diversity.

City Council adopted a public art Comprehensive Plan amendment on April 12, 2021. The amendment notes "Establish Procedures for Reviewing and Accepting Public Art" as a short-term action. The process described throughout this memo will function as a pilot program for review.

Community Support

There is community support for this project. The Falls Church Women's History Group has supported portraits of Mattie Gundry and Frederick Foote Jr. to be added to Council Chambers and the Falls Church Village Preservation Society (VPIS) has offered to collect the funds needed to support artwork for City Hall.

Project Goals

The goals of this project is to keep the current portraits hanging in council chambers and add additional artwork to meet the City Council's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and vision for celebrating the City's history, community character and cultural diversity. This includes adding portraits for chambers and creating space for other art forms such as a collage or mural throughout city hall.

Medium

As stated above, the existing artwork in Council Chambers takes the form of portraiture. Staff recommends that an array of mediums be considered for future portraits, such as but not limited to oil, pastels, watercolor or photography. Staff also recommends considering art forms outside of portraiture for installation such as collage, or murals. Finally, Staff recommends that the subject be represented through a style of art that is representative of the period in which they lived.

Funding Options

The question of funding continues to be the most difficult part of this project. We have list current options available at this time.

- **Community Fundraising:** There is significant community support for this project and an opportunity to support the financial needs of this project through funding from both for-profit and non-profit organizations. The VPIS has offered to collect donations for this project through their organization.
- **Grant Funding:** The Virginia Commission for the Arts Project Grant includes applications for commissions of new works of art by government institutions. Grant amounts range between \$1,000 and \$5,000 and must provide at least a one –to-one cash match of the awarded amount.
- **Operating Budget/Capital Improvements Budget:** The recently added public art amendment to the City's comprehensive plan recommends providing regular public funding for art through Operating Budget or Capital Improvements Budget. If implemented, this funding source would provide the funds needed to complete this project.

Timing

With the understanding that selecting art, creating art and identifying funding for art can all take a significant amount of time. The following basic outline has been created to help guide our work.

- Part 1: Add 2-3 Portraits to City Council Chambers
- Part 2: Add 2-3 new pieces of art within City Hall, specifically the lobby area, dogwood room and registrar's office.
- Part 3: Reassessment of needs and identify future opportunities

Part 1: Recommended Guidelines for Future Portraiture

The selected subject individuals should meet the following criteria.

- Demonstrated exemplary service to the Falls Church Community
- Demonstrates the City's commitment to diversity and equity (including, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin).
- Demonstrates the City's commitment to culture, history, or heritage
- The individual must be deceased, or exception granted by City Council

Part 2: Recommended Guidelines for Other Works of Art

These recommendations will be further developed in the future. These recommendations will include artwork of varying types including murals, statues, etc.

Criteria for Evaluating Portraiture Recommendations

The following criteria is designed to help decision makers evaluate community recommendations based on the project goals.

Appropriateness

- Does the individual meet the guidelines?
 - The subject individual demonstrated exemplary service to the Falls Church Community.
 - The subject individual demonstrates the City's commitment to diversity and equity (including, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin).
 - i. Does the subject individual represent intersectionality?
 - The subject individual demonstrates the City's commitment to culture, history, or heritage.
 - The subject individual must be deceased, or exception granted by City Council

Merit

- How well does the proposed subject individual meet the guidelines?
- Did the subject individual assume notable achievements? If so, please list them below.
- How did the subject individual uphold exemplary ethics and values?
- How did the subject individual demonstrate strong leadership?
- How did the subject individual bring about change and impact to the community? Was this lasting change?

Community

- How did the subject individual represent their commitment to the community?
- Does the subject individual have ties to community groups, associations and organizations? Please list them.
- Does the community support the recommendation and/or is there opposition?

Process

Staff recommends the following process for approving the proposed goals and guidelines:

Step 1: The Arts and Humanities Council reviews the proposed goals and guidelines and makes an advisory recommendation to City Council.

Step 2: City Council holds a work session to review the proposed goals and guidelines.

Step 3: City Council holds a public hearing to adopt the proposed goals and guidelines by way of resolution.

If this framework for an approval process proves to be successful, Staff recommends that it is utilized as the formalized process for approving public art in the City Hall.